



Behold the Great Sir Sidrophel Who does such cures no Man can tell
Quack Whaccum is the friend As is by all allow'd All Sickness flies at his Approach
Here take his Pills — You'll keep your coach

The HISTORY of Sir SIDROPHEL, and his Man WHACCUM.

I Have lately received repeated Intelligence, from a certain Country famous for Dumplings and dull Heads, that an Itinerant Quack has lately strowed about the Country, amusing the People with a Thousand idle Stories of what great Things he has performed in his Travels; by the by, you must observe the Fellow scarce ever travelled out of the Smoak of his own Chimney; but that is Nothing; all Quacks must flourish a little in their Speeches — he has made a most triumphant Progress from Town to Town in a very odd Equipage, being hung round with Ribbons of various Colours, like a Morris-Dancer. There hangs a Medal at the End of each of these Ribbons, which he pretends to be Presents from Foreign Potentates, for the great Cures he has performed.

Your Quacks generally have but one Medicine, which Medicine is to cure all the Diseases in the Weekly Bills; it is just so with the Quack, of whom we are speaking; he has been heard to say in his Speech to the People, and with a grave Face too — *If there be any amongst you, who is apprehensive of being Poor, let him take these Pills.*

People never open their Pockets so freely as with a View of increasing their Wealth, and our Quack from Time to Time has drawn great Sums of Money from the People, by these impudent Pretences; but when they found themselves bit, they grumbled a little, as was natural, at the Doctor. — Upon these Occasions the Doctor has sometimes given himself most insolent Airs, and treated the very Persons he had abused, as Rogues and Vagabonds, and Cheats, and Sturdy-Beggars.

But nothing has been more diverting to me, than the odd and fantastick Catalogue of his Cures, which he carries along with him to dispense amongst the Multitude, and which one of his Zanis, of whom we shall have Occasion to speak hereafter, often expatiated upon, with a great deal of absurd Oratory.

I remember among the rest, that he pretends to have cured the King of France of a Loofiness in his Pocket, and that this Prince has made so perfect a Recovery, that he now saves his Money, and is observed to grow exceedingly rich. His next Cure was upon his Majesty's M—y, whom he pretends to have cured of all Attachments to his Neighbours, or Dependence upon his A—s, so that he now pursues his own Interest, as if they were not to be relied upon — The next in the List is, that he once cured a whole Nation of their Trade, with all the Symptoms of Repletion, which are generally the Consequences of it; so that you could see Thousands sit with their Arms across, without being embarrassed with any Business. But the most ridiculous of all was, that he shewed some scurvy Drawings, which he said were the Pictures of several Prelates and Pastors of the Church, (of what Church I cannot say, but I suppose of the Church of Rome) these he pretended had been all his Patients, and he wished himself at the Devil if he had not cured them all of the Christian Religion.

This Quack has lately taken upon himself the Name of Sir Sidrophel the *Roguesian*, and he was attended by a Zani, whom he called his Man Whaccum, tho' it was suspected by some, that they were both of a Family, and as two Harlots, when they set up in Partnership are Maid and Mistress by Turns, so Sir Sidrophel and Whaccum were Master and Man, by Turns, and it is not doubted but they were equal Sharers in the Profits of every Cheat. As to Sir Sidrophel, many who had seen and observed him upon this Peregrination, were of Opinion, that he was the same Person, who under the Name of *Ferdinando Ferdinandi* for many Years followed the Trade of exhibiting Monitors for Money, and now thought it advisable to change his Name.

As to the Fortune and Accomplishments, of his Man Whaccum, if we proceed in Order, we must begin by giving an Account of his Education, of which I have received no more than this short Account, that he was one of those that breed up themselves; but when he arrived at the Age of Manhood, it is said that his whole Estate, Real and Personal, might amount to about two Shirts and a Rag, and as all Creatures are endued with a Kind of Instinct towards Self-Preservation, Whaccum cast about how he should live in the World. To this Purpose he got himself introduced to a great Lady, who was very rich, and famous for her Benevolence and Good-nature, to beg some Employment from her; this great Lady asked poor Whaccum a most unlucky Question, for she desired to know of him what he was fit for: Whaccum has owned a Thousand Times since, that he never was so

puzzled in all his Life, he scratched his empty Head, and attempted to look wise; but cou'd return no Answer — *Vox fatusus haest* — The good Lady observing the Perplexity into which she had thrown him, sent him away, telling him, she wou'd give him a Month to answer that Enigma; at the Month's End Whaccum returns with all the Marks of Success in his Countenance, and having presented himself before the Lady, said to her, Madam, you desired to know what I was fit for, then your Ladyship must understand that I am fit for — here he scratched his Head, and repeated the same Thing fifty Times, without being able to get any farther, at length he made an End thus, that is to say, *I am fit for every Thing*; but, says the Lady, this is no Answer, I desire to know what you understand. Oh! answers Whaccum, there is nothing easier than to answer that, then your Ladyship must know, that I understand — here he paused, and having scratched his Head again in vain, he said — I had found it out once; but now I think on't, I have forgot it — thus Whaccum thought to get off by attempting a Joke.

The Lady's Steward, who was present, and had been all this while observing the Figure and Gesture of Whaccum, says to the Lady, I think if your Ladyship approves it, I have found out an Employment that he is fit for, one of your Ladyship's Gardens is infested with Crows and Jack-daws, he would make an excellent Scarecrow — a Scarecrow! replies Whaccum, no I thank you for that, I had much rather be an Ambassador; this made the Lady laugh; however she said she would take the Advice of her Domestic, and he determined by that, accordingly they were all called up, and the Question being put whether the Person before them was fittest for a Scarecrow or an Ambassador, it passed *Nomine contradicte* for the Scarecrow, upon which Whaccum returned in Dudgeon, having refused the only Employment for which he was duly qualified.

Whether he ever arrived at what his odd Ambition aimed at is not material, at least I have not Time to trace him now, because I am obliged to return to Sir Sidrophel.

Sir Sidrophel was one of those who have not Invention to strike out any Thing new even in Roguery — all his Artifices were such as had been practised over and over by other Quacks; but then he wanted their Conduct to carry him thro'; for as I take it, the chief Address of a Quack consists in being able to conceal his Ignorance from the World, but here Sir Sidrophel failed; for by a wrong Turn in his Head he was ever exposing himself this Way; had he been content with persuading People in full Health that they were Sick, and to have given them a little Powder of *Poss*, which would have done neither Good nor Hurt, or had he been satisfied with setting Bones that never were broke, he might have passed long undiscovered; but such an absurd Presumption governed him, that he would break Bones, and then shew he had not the Skill to set them again; as if a Minister of State finding Affairs well established by good and sound Treaties, should break those Treaties, embarrass his Country, only to expose his own Want of Capacity, to bring Things right again; but these preposterous Spirits are often seen in the World.

It was by such a Conduct that Sir Sidrophel came to be blown — the more he was known, the more he was despised, and his Practice was universally cried down — when he found the Spirit thus rising against him, he told the People he perceived they were all dim-sighted, and Whaccum made a long Harangue to prove it, telling them, that the Doctor, to shew his Good-nature, was willing to cure them of this new Distemper for nothing, and that by a Method altogether new; but some of them being inquisitive into this new Method, found it was to be done by putting out their Eyes.

All these Things put together obliged Sir Sidrophel to go a Journey, and visit a Province where he thought he had some Friends — his Pockets were full of Money, and he was resolved to have Fame, tho' he paid for it — In this Progress Whaccum was of great Use not only in diverting the Mob with Grimace, but he promised a Thousand of them to make them great Men, if they would only say Sir Sidrophel was a good Doctor; to others Money was scattered for the same Purpose. — As amongst the Multitude there must be some Knaves, some Fools, the Fools were won by Promises, and the Knaves prevailed upon for the Ready, to hollow for the Doctor; but Sir Sidrophel went a Step further to support a rotten Reputation; for as Alexander the Great of old intending to visit the Oracle of Delphos, sent a large Bribe privately to the Priests to salute him the Son of Jupiter Ammon; so Sir Si-

drophel having a Desire to shew himself in all his Glory in a Country Town, did upon certain Considerations engage some Persons there to acknowledge him a Doctor.

It was agreed between them that he was to enter the Town in a triumphant Manner, attended by all his Hirelings. — Whaccum led the Van, with a Yard of dirty Shirt hanging out before, and as much behind, scratching his Head with one Hand, and pulling up his Breeches with the other, next came Sir Sidrophel himself, a goodly Countenance, bronzed over — but I will not attempt to describe the Cavalcade, I shall leave it to the Poets — Poor Ned Ward is dead, otherwise it would have been a Subject worthy of his Muse.

I will only observe that they proceeded either to a Tavern, a College, or a Hall, where their Friends who had been retained for this Purpose waited to receive them. Sir Sidrophel was no sooner entered, but one of the Company, who was promised at least to be made a Parish Beadle for this Service, advances towards him, and in an Harangue full of Wind and Bombast salutes him, and at the same Time in the Name of his Brethren presents him with the Diploma of Doctor, either in a Gold, a Silver, or a Brass Box, I don't care which; Sir Sidrophel answered this Harangue with another altogether in Praise of himself, except a little Digression in Favour of Whaccum. Whaccum next makes a Speech in Praise of himself and Sir Sidrophel; Sir Sidrophel he extolled as the greatest Doctor, and himself as the most finished Zani in the World; but he concluded his Speech by telling the Company, that they looked a little sheepish and out of Countenance, as if they were ashamed of what they were doing; but my Friends, adds he, take Courage, be like Sir Sidrophel and me, for you see we are ashamed of Nothing.

The Evening concluded with a magnificent Feast, for Sir Sidrophel spared no Cost, and indeed he need not, for he was only treating the Fools with their own Money: The Glass went about freely, and the old Saying was made good, that when the Wine is in, the Wit is out; for Sir Sidrophel being called upon for a Toast, drank Success to Brands in all Trades and Professions whatsoever; Whaccum's Toast was, that the World might be governed by Quacks and Zanies; the more they drank, the more foolish they grew, and discovered not only all their former Tricks, but those they intended to commit.

Next Day they departed in the same State, Sir Sidrophel appearing as full of Glory as *Sancha* when he was made a Governor, and Whaccum as proud as *Sancha's* Ais dressed up in new Trappings to accompany his Master to his Government, every Body laughing at the Farce; for there was not a Woman or a Child in the Town but knew that Sir Sidrophel paid for his Diploma.

Now I have finished my Story, it is likely all the World will look upon it as a mere Fable; — I own it is a Fable, and it is likely I shall be asked where is the Moral.

All I can say to this is, 'That every Man who affects popular Applause by a Conduct that is neither wise nor honest, is a Kind of Sir Sidrophel, and like him must have Recourse to Tricks to purchase even the Appearance of it, and every Man who abets and supports such a one is a Kind of a Whaccum.'

If we should carry our Reflections a little farther, I will suppose that a Man in a great Station, who has an infinite Number of Things at his Disposal, and who has raised a great Estate from little or nothing, may create a Number of Dependants in the Country where he was born, by drawing many from all Ways of Industry to hang entirely upon him, and it would be no Surprise that he should be cried up by these; but if I should see this very Person opposed, even in his own Country, by those who were reputed the Men of the greatest Worth and Honour in it, I should think him a Wretch indeed. As for my Part, were I the greatest Man in the Kingdom, I should be ashamed to boast of a little Popularity in a Country Town, at the same Time that I was hanged in Effigie in every other Part of the Kingdom; and it has often been found by Experience, that Popularity is like some Plants, that never spread if they are forced.

If there be a Person in the World in such a Situation as is here described, I will tell him a Story — 'Cromwell riding into the City amidst a Number of Spectators, and a Mob hollowing about him, Lambert, who accompanied him at the Head of the Troops, seemed mightily pleased with the Shew and Applause; but Cromwell observing what the Hollowers contained of, said to Lambert, Cousen, Cousen, there would be a much greater Crowd, and ten Times the shouting, if you and I were both in a Sled, going to be hang'd.'